

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

I am concerned with the restrictions to my personal use that the broadcast flag may create. For instance, currently I am able to chose to watch a TV program as it is being broadcast, or I may chose to "time shift" to allow myself the opportunity to watch the program at a later time (perhaps when I am home from class or church or other activity). Will this prevent me from this practice which has been considered fair use for over a decade, or will this end access to programs except during the actual broadcast time period? Will this prevent me from creating a copy of a program that I may chose to take with me for viewing at a later time at another location?

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices?

I am also concerned that I may need to purchase multiple copies of materials simply to move the usage of the product between rooms, summer and winter homes, vacation usage. Will it be illegal for me to make a copy of a program and then share the viewing experience of that specific copy with a friend?

Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

What will the commercial impact be on the consumer. Will I need to buy new products to continue current viewing or time shifting practices? What is the financial impact on me and other consumers? It seems that as technology is changing, the creators of the programming information are intent on restricting access to the program material. Will our society be poorer for this? Perhaps this will be the single most likely change in the system which will create an interest in delaying the advance of DTV.

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

The broadcast flag requirement appears to be a grab for the dollar. Not because of concerns that home users are abusing the process, but because the market place competitiveness has created an environment where the production of the material is no longer profitable. Here is a case where it appears that a free market economy is only desirable when the money flows freely. When the competition gets tough, the first choice is to place restrictions on the consumer. I will not bother to watch future programming if I am force to buy additional new equipment to accommodate the broadcast flag.

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

I think that to place additional costs on the consumer when the consumer is already faced with bearing costs for the DTV development is outrageous. I have contemplated purchasing a DTV ready receiver, but if enough restrictions on use of the material are initiated, I will not follow through. My TV receivers average age has moved downward in the last several years, however I have one unit that is at least 18 years old and other are fairly new. However, I will be happy to continue using my older sets until they fail if the incentives for moving to new technology are

removed.

Other Comments:

At the risk of sounding anti-technology, which I am not, my sense is that we are looking at a technology stifling action the the producers of the programming. The financial model they have been promoting is threatened and they are siezing the opportunity to capture a market by promoting restrictive technology. I am amazed that the extension of the copyright period has been allowed to the point of providing nearly a permanent path to prevent public use of material. If the desire is to guarantee income, perhaps this is better done of the fair use doctrine is re-inforced and perhaps the copyright period is returned to a more resonable period.